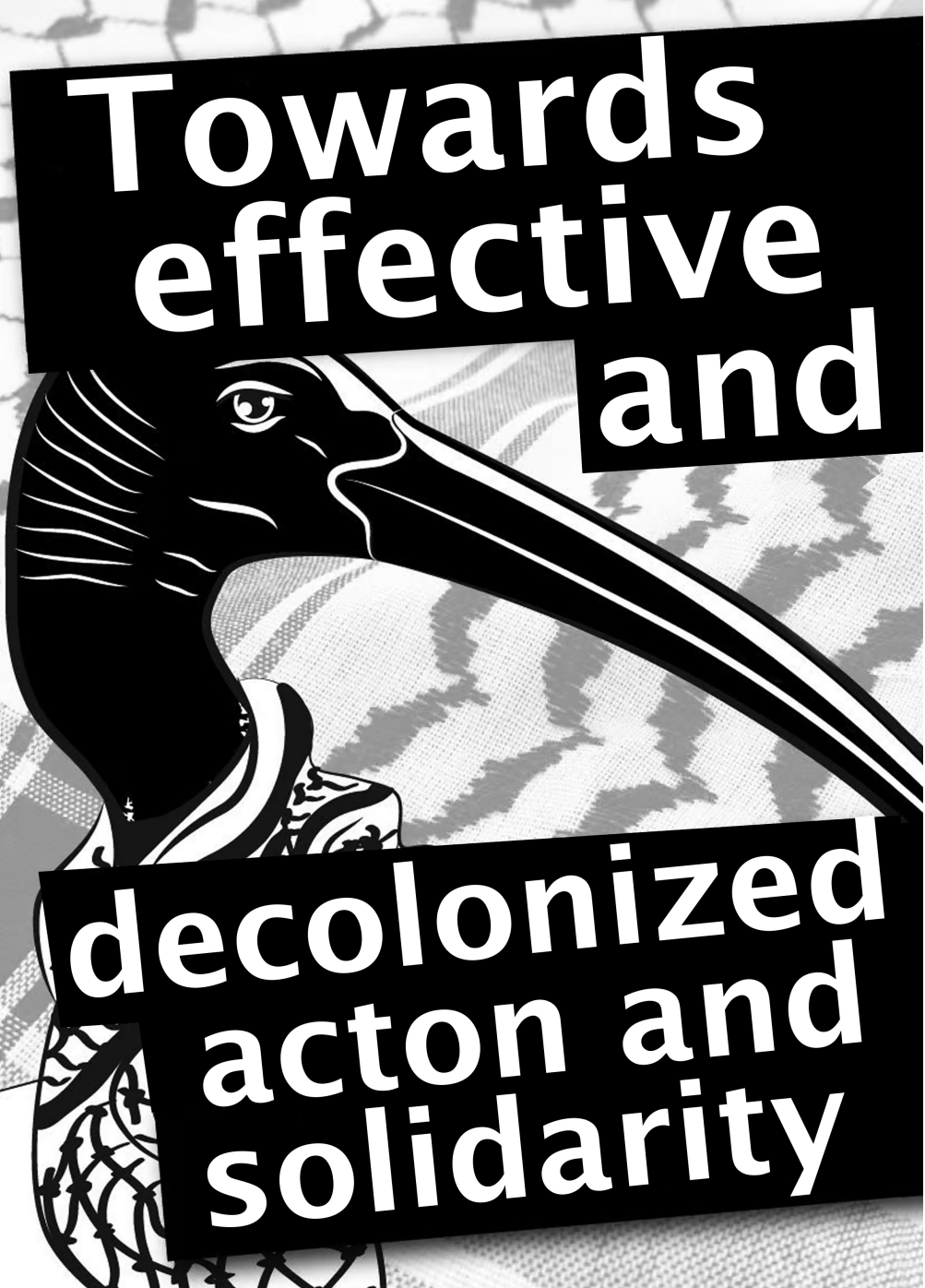
Towards effective and decolonized acton and solidarity



“In our thousands and in our millions - we are all Palestinians”.

The crux of why I’m writing right now is because I want to contribute to movements that undermine the settler colony of Australia and how we within it can contribute effectively alongside one another in solidarity with people in global resistance. Our brothers and sisters in Occupied Palestine are living through the abomination of settler colonialism in its most distilled form of genocidal intent. Indigenous people in other settler and extractivist colonies also continue to survive and fight against the dispossession of their right to land and culture, we must exemplify and support the resistance movements in Palestine and across the Arab world whilst undermining the colonial project here in so-called Australia; to globalise the intifada. The oft recited chant above invites us to position ourselves as such, in our relative comfort and safety we are not abstracted from this need for decolonial rebellion. We don’t scream this chant to position ourselves rhetorically as somehow in Gaza right now having bombs dropped on us, but rather to express and understand ourselves as oppressed by the same systems of imperialist, capitalist, white supremacy that dominates globally. Whilst land liberation movements

form the basis of decolonization as we know it, we must also work to decolonize ourselves as part of our praxis which in turn increases our ability to work together, see each other and cooperate effectively. The process of decolonization does not exclude white people as an assumption often seemingly persists.
It has to be done in ways that challenge ourselves internally, to undo the makeup of the colonizing that we have experienced all of which is unique depending on our position and relation to not only the land we live but to each other; we have all been hurt by the white-hetero-normative-patriarchal-capitalist world we exist in but which often informs or infringes on the way we move together or the ways we don't move together - the ways we dominate each other and the ways we limit our thinking and innovation. This is connected to power and trauma and how culturally we are so disempowered and hurt that in movements vanguardism, attention seeking and posturing often seem to take precedence over getting to know each other, eating food together and building mutuality, trust and a force that threatens the state, it gets in the way of *actually getting things done*. Seemingly through these conduits of conditionality and the tenuousness of our social safety, micro fascisms of clout chasing and socially indoctrinated entitlements of whiteness and class hierarchies, we don't seem to be able to make clear decisions or act with a deep integrity together toward collective liberation and in step with a global movement or each other. I'm not just writing this

to critique the nature of the actions that are taking place as not enough, I'm writing to suggest that it seems that the places from where we move internally and together aren't comfortable and calm; a place from where a threatening opposition to domination can be better developed. We need to learn about each other, see each other, critique each other and be accountable to each other. We need to experiment in action, think for ourselves, undo our dogmas, breathe and model autonomy and challenge attitudes and behaviours that pull us apart and are created and indentured in many contexts, even well-intentioned spaces like activist culture. And yes, this is all about decolonization - not just fighting for geo-political decolonization - but fighting to disinter the harms that are pushed into us as victims or ‘beneficiaries’ of colonising mindsets like patriarchy, white supremacy, property, class et al - and being brave enough to see these things when they don’t present in typical ways as well. When our intersecting privileges might look different from a simplistic identity politic that has taught us to see some identities as more available to critique, less discomforting to critique. These things play out in our movements and paradoxically inhibit our clarity of thought when we embody them. Even or especially it seems in ways when we particularly think we are undermining them - entitlement, power, patronising hand wringing, paternalism, thinking *for* other people, undermining autonomy, modes of control, assumptions about abilities, assumptions about capacities,

assumptions about anything, being rigid and inflexible in our approaches - these things often happen from a place over performative or awkward 'PCness' for a lack of a better term. So, make no mistake, we are at war and the relative social peace in the settler colony of so-called Australia is merely a veneer of comfort draped over all of our oppression and the sense of togetherness we experience in the globalised movement for liberation. Our activism should not be a performance. It should not be a liberal progressivism to push for our institutions to say different things, so we feel less complicit with, for example, a genocide, because we outsource our autonomy and dreams of freedom to a government that is entirely illegitimate anyway. We must move together to bring down the apparatus' that perpetuate genocide in Palestine, but which keep us complicit in dispossession of First Nations people here. This includes making sure our actions are goal driven and effective and push the comfort levels of liberal Australia *because they are effective,* and this challenges us - in anti-authoritarian and 'left' spaces and pushes conversations to new places. Whilst taking decisive, effective, and unsettling action we also must learn to undo those colonialities that can inhibit not only the relationships and trust between us but also lead us internally to have conflicts of self. We need to unsettle the colony and that means unsettling ourselves, questioning our positionality in this mess; go under instead of over all the time, going in instead of looking out. Get to know ourselves. Get to know each

other. Move with a generative intent and belief in the once unbelievable. This isn't comfortable work, and it isn't fucking therapy either.

This is an offer that does not come from a place of all knowing or righteousness nor is this comprehensive in any way. I want to contribute and try to bring us closer together as a means of engaging in bigger, more impactful, more militant, if need be, direct action. We can only do this if we have a better understanding of our motives, languages, and ourselves. This is why I'm trying to address some simple concepts and simple languages about action. I'm not tryna tell anyone how to suck eggs - but I've been confronted a bit recently regarding how some of these concepts have been envisioned/acted upon. Whilst doing this I want to gently impress the connection that I've made about the need for a decoloniality to be more centred in oztraya activist culture/movements and how this might look. These are gentle suggestions not comprehensive and firm assertions.

Not everyone that is moved to action for Palestinian liberation is moved to unsettle the Australian colonial project, this is fine and speaks to the need of knowing each other in order to move together *as much as we can* in these limitations of our expressions of solidarity, action and liberation. Whilst I hope it is clear that I believe our liberation is ultimately tied to challenging everything about the paradigm in which we are kept as people in a settler colony, this does not preclude the

involvement and nurturing of growth and analysis for those around who take a more liberal approach to politics. I can strongly oppose liberalism and hold space for the belief that people can move further into a radical politic, and I know that slandering and undermining people does not help this movement take place but often beds people into a place of defensive reaction. I am inspired by the energy that has arisen through in this particular moment of disaster and believe we can educate each other and create bonds that transfer this call for liberation into spaces that are more immediate and are implicitly hand in hand with decolonial resistance that has always been taking place in settled and extractivist colonies. Let us not tire and be overwhelmed by a cynicism in our critiques and let us not be quelled by liberal calls and actions. *In our thousands and in our millions....*

What are symbolic and material actions?

There are different types of direct action that can broadly be separated by whether they are symbolic actions or material actions. Symbolic actions have no immediate effect on that which perpetuates the activity you are protesting against. Symbolic action can be powerful and informative and inspiring and spread a message. It is geared toward affecting public discourse or leveraging those in power to make a change. It requires some steps to take place for a material outcome to occur that impacts your actual target. Firstly, that the message

created through the action reaches its intended target and secondly that the intended target has the agency and will to affect the change that the symbolic action impresses. It is thus slightly abstracted from a material outcome.

Material actions are different to this in that when a material action is taken, that in some way and to some degree it directly and immediately impacts its intended target. A simple example of how these two types of action can look is say you're at a logging coupe and you hang a banner next to a machine that says, "stop logging" and take a photo with some people and then publish this photo - this is a symbolic action - whereas if you pour sugar into the fuel tank of the machine this is a material action. I am not weighing the impact of one of these kinds of action over another, everything has its place and time, it is just to be clear about the distinction and be able to apply it to the plethora of actions that we undertake. This is to be clearer about goals and potentials when we take a particular action and to use language effectively to know what we are undertaking.

Sometimes and it could be arguable that there is elements of both symbolic and material effect taking place in particular actions like say an office occupation - a symbolic action - but it is able to interrupt the office enough to affect the staff's ability to do a normal day's work thus having a material outcome in their days output. This may or may not be measurable; the more measurable a material action is, the more concretely sure we can be that there is a material result. Ie; we know that staff were interrupted because they were

standing around not working or they were sent home because of the occupation’s presence.

A caveat here that must be said is the immeasurable but real power in simply getting together to cooperate and doing stuff! I believe, beyond the dichotomy of symbolic/material action is the real-world internal impacts of building solidarity and doing activities alongside one another. No matter the effectiveness of our symbolic action reaching anyone or the piddly amount our material action might cost, the practice and pursuit of doing these things alongside other people can be inspiring and have ripples within ourselves and our communities. It can increase participation and build collective strength and relationships. Now, I don't want to overload this too much, because too easily we can get into ruts of taking rote actions of a patterned nature that can actually become part of the system we are trying to undermine. This happens when symbolic actions are taken to the point where they become completely toothless and even state sanctioned - a trap of liberals. When we rely on symbolic actions and are not creative within them, we often just end up performing deluded notions of democracy and do not challenge anything about our settler colonial position. It seems easy in Western countries for self-congratulatory meaningless things to pervade milieus of activism. I just think it is very important however to notice, know and acknowledge what solidarity building and collectivity can inspire.

What is a blockade?

“First restrain, then blockade, lastly destroy”.

- Aron Nimzowitch.

A blockade is an action taken to disrupt access to an infrastructure in order to undermine its intended functionality or to deprive it from its ability to function entirely. This is done in a variety of ways and in a variety of contexts. In our current context as people who get together to undermine/attack/prevent actions by governments or corporations from taking place often we use the term blockade for a number of different potentials. Different manners of blockade exist, and they can change within the undertaking of the action between *partial* or *total* blocks and *temporary* or *permanent* blocks. Famously blockades have been utilised by environmental defenders in Australia as a means to prevent environmental destruction from taking place but are also used to disrupt generally or specifically to cause economic damage or garner attention.

Examples of successful blockades include saving Goolengook from deforestation in East Gippsland, the Franklin River and Florentine Valley from dams and deforestation respectively in Tasmania and Jabiluka in the NT from uranium mining. It is important to note that these successful blockades were a contributing tactic

that worked alongside broader strategies; sometimes welcomed by those participating in the broader strategy and sometimes not so much. But there is no doubt that blockades contributed to literally saving particular places, literally slowing down the progression of projects and also contributed greatly to awareness raising that impacted community sentiment.

‘Fort Goolengook’ existed for five years (97-02) before it was raided and destroyed. This was a *permanent total block* and completely prevented a shitload of forest from being smashed by right of its existence. After it was destroyed only three coupes got logged before a moratorium was implemented and thereafter it was protected from 2006 - defenders knew the moratorium was impending and so unfortunately had to witness the destruction of these coupes prior to its implementation. Camp Florentine, also a permanent total block, existed right up until moratoriums were in place and laws changed preventing the projects from continuing. For the most part these actions completely prevented work from going ahead on these projects - inhibiting the activity from the government/private companies entirely by effectively disrupting and occupying the infrastructure that was required for the work to go ahead and by bedding down to stay as long as possible, living in situ. These are examples of what I would call materially impactful total blocks, of course beyond this they were part of media/political campaigns and influenced public opinion, but the blockades themselves were not symbolic actions, they were materially impactful by nature of their existence.

Different examples including the Jabiluka blockade against uranium mining and the Warners Crossing blockade against the Franklin River Dam were temporary total blocks and at other times temporary partial blocks that would be smashed by police regularly and would regroup and reassert the blockade when possible. These too were part of broader campaigns and were at the sticky end trying to continually impinge on any work that was or could be going on. These campaigns also had huge popular support and relied on large numbers of people getting arrested often over and over again. There were moments when these were *partial blocks* because after a block was removed by the state work would go ahead only to be blocked again - this would prevent for example more machinery going in but would not prevent work that was being undertaken since the dispersal of the previous blockade.

Recently there have been examples of blockades taking place at ports. These *temporary partial* blocks may have at times been able slow the transportation of road goods into or out of the ports, but they have not been able to affect the work taking place inside of the ports or the shipping lines themselves to any measurable degree. Primarily these actions have been symbolic expressions of solidarity. The only potential outlier here being the claim by protesters in WA that a port worker shift change was prevented from taking place rendering the port non active for a shift period. This was not a blockade as traffic was never blocked and rather it was a picket line that workers did not cross, a noteworthy distinction and

opportunity to review tactics elsewhere depending on the desired/communicated goal of the action.
Key questions to ask then are;

- What are we/are we blocking?
- What more could we block?
- Is this symbolic or material?
- To what degree are we disrupting the infrastructure we are targeting?
- How long can we stay here and what impact could this cause?
- What opportunities are there to broaden the impact of this if they arise?
- Is this situation worth getting arrested for?
- Does this *look* fantastic?
- How do we feel?

As you can see some of these questions are about being clear about what is going on and what could be going on, having that directness to know the impacts and the non-impacts of what is happening in regards to economic disruption/totality of the blockade's effects. The question of arrest is layered and personal (and so people need to do their own thinking about their own circumstance) but beyond that can be thought of rationally. If a blockade is going to be swept aside relatively quickly and the impacts of the blockade are partial or minimal, it's probably not a good idea to get in the emotional back and forth with the police about staying on a road/railroad/bridge. This doesn't mean you shouldn't play with that tension if it's fun or annoying for them; run around and disobey orders to the nth degree, but arrests

are costly, can be traumatic and are not worth being wasted on low impact temporary actions. Arrests in these circumstances mostly happen because people get emotionally attached to the idea of what they are doing and not about *what they are actually achieving/able to achieve* or otherwise get stimulated into pointless police confrontation because we get triggered by their presence. The question of how it looks is about community perception and inspiration. The kayak action in Melbourne recently looked great, but could it have broadened its impact beyond its symbolic nature? Or was it successful enough as a symbolic demonstration? (Despite claims it is my estimation that this action materially did very little if anything at all). Do we have amazing banners or infrastructure like tripods that can create a visual element to the symbolic side of the action? How could this look *cooler*? These days optics can be a big part of the game when it comes to getting new people on board or the tone of media coverage and if your action is symbolic, that is what it is all about. It is in this regard where I believe the kayak action was cool as fuck. The last question about feeling is about energy, comradery, and potential. It is important to talk, have fun and meet people you don’t know. This keeps spaces buoyant and can prevent fizzle out. But if it's fizzling, acknowledge and bail, no need to stay somewhere if it's not impactful and people are drained or feeling low.

Strategy/Tactics/Goals

"Know thyself, know thy enemy. A thousand battles, a thousand victories"

- Sun Tzu

Ultimately the question to start with here is about getting on the same page and learning about each other to know each other. What are our goals? When we take any action, we should know what is driving each other to take action? There are two levels of goals I refer to here. There are our endgame goals; big picture, ultimate goals - what drives us - and the goals of an individual action; what we believe we need to do to get us closer to our ultimate goal. Our long-term strategic goals and our short term tactical goals. Are your goals simply to have a good time? To hang out with your friends? Check for hotties? Gain clout? Assert/exert social power? To change a particular policy? To stop a particular project? To build solidarity generally? To bring about a socialist government? To end climate injustice? To challenge, undermine and ultimately collapse the settler colony that we inhabit? None of these are necessarily bad or wrong, but we ought to be able to go deep within ourselves to know from where we move. (This is connected to our praxis of decolonization internally as well. We may want to upend the settler colonial state through action, but do we show that we are willing to end that within ourselves? Only the way we hold ourselves to account and relate to

people can we demonstrate the truth of this commitment acknowledging the journey of learning and unlearning that this is).
To what extent do our ultimate goals align? Because when we know about our overlapping contexts, the extent to which we move on common ground or not, can we then make informed decisions together about what kind of actions we can do together, to what degree we can expect to apply a tactic, and the nature of our relationships that we can forge within the action. Obviously in moments of energy and rupture there isn't time and space to have these conversations. That is where it is up to us individually or alongside our relationships of affinity to know at least within ourselves from where we move and to try to be attentive and perceptive of indicators of other people's locations. But knowing this stuff is important and encouraging each other to know themselves is important thus we can know the bigger 'we'.

A tactic is an action that is employed to achieve a goal that aligns with a broader strategy. Example:
Goal - End native forest logging
Strategy - Lobby a government to change laws so that they utilize their power to stop people/industry native forest logging.
Tactics - Blockade pieces of forest to stop work in particular locations. Awareness raise through social media campaigns. Call politicians to insist it stop. Sign

petitions. Undertake citizen science. Booby trap logging coupes/infrastructure/machinery. Occupy the offices of corporate beneficiaries.

Some of these tactics are symbolic, some of them material. But they can all align with the broader strategy of trying to convince a government to change a law. There are points of contention here of course. It could be argued that for example booby trapping logging coupes, occupying offices or blockading could detract from public support and thus undermine this broader strategy. This is where it depends on individual's feelings of immediacy, accountability, and values. If you partake in these tactics to end native forest logging but this is also in congruence with a deeper ultimate goal of undermining and disrupting the function of government, you might be less concerned about potentially upsetting some people through your forest defence actions as part of your broader strategy to undermine the concept of governability. Because demonstrating ungovernability is, as anarchists have long called it, 'propaganda by deed'.

Know yourself. What is your ultimate goal - why do you act?
Know your comrades. Why do they act?
Know the tactic. What are we doing?
Know the strategy. Why are we doing it?

If your tactic is being over celebrated as completed when it is not, you are undermining your strategy which calls into question why you act.

Your strategy is going to work best if you know your enemy. There is no point employing tactics to contribute to a strategy that inflicts no damage to the enemy. Not knowing your limitations or the enemies' strengths is where we often fail or fall short thus Zapatismo "prepares itself to fail. That is, it imagines the worst-case scenario. With that horizon in perspective, plans are drawn up and proposals detailed." Zapatismo is steeped in its humble bounds toward victory. This does not mean we focus on our 'horizons' and allow ourselves to stall in worry of them but rather we know what is within reach and move together toward it with constant learning and understanding of the enemy. (Fourteenth Part and Second Approach Alert: The (other) Rule of the Excluded Third - EZLN).

Be sure to know why you're doing something. Be sure to know the possibilities good and bad. Be sure to know these things together and act together.

Goal of action clarity

“He will win whose army is animated by the same spirit throughout all its ranks”.

- Sun Tzu

Once we’re clear in our minds about the links between our chosen tactic, its application to a broader strategy (and the acknowledgement of differences we can have herein), its potentials and limitations, that's when we can move together to achieve the best outcomes. The reason to be specific about this is that I’ve recently witnessed actions where it has felt like many participants haven’t known what was going on or why let alone how they could increase the actions effectiveness or detract from its effectiveness through their choices. It has felt like leaders/organizers of actions have often not known or thought about these things themselves and have disproportionately under or overestimated the outcomes of actions by calling things off or claiming preposterous victories. The truth is somewhere in between all of this, I believe small actions have power; 5 people blocking a road for 15 minutes can be inspiring for participants and observers. I also believe larger actions can be blown up in misguided attempts to congratulate participants or posture to the media like blocking a road all day that has zero impact on what it's saying it's ‘blocking’ but being hailed as a success and as if it had material impact when there was zero.

This goal of action clarity is necessary to be honest with ourselves so we can better work with a clear knowledge

of the resources we have toward the best possible outcomes with explicit knowledge of these limitations and capacities.

Do not overstate action nor understate the actions potentiality. Do not glorify or admonish arrests. Encourage autonomy and self-determination within the action. Be self-aware enough to know whether an action is primarily a symbolic action or not and that there is validity and power in knowing and seeing that. This circumvents traps that are very present in our society; traps that make us want to seem cool, that vie for clout and social capital which in the left is often given for proximity to ideas of ‘militancy’ or being ‘hardcore’ or ‘successful’ - this applies to both individuals and ‘activist’ groups. What is important to point out here is that in our current context of a Palestinian liberation movement, expressions of solidarity and impact of actions ought to be stringently realistic and honest - they always should be; but more so in the case of human liberation as equating impacts with goals to a people becomes a barbaric lie. Especially when it comes from a Western imperialist context. People are suffering and dying - you don’t need to oversell the impacts of your actions to the world to make you feel better or to try and make other people feel better about you. We need to simply do everything that we can and are willing to do to support and make Palestinian liberation a reality/undermine and incur on the Zionist project’s infrastructure and modes of normality. When we go into actions without clear understanding of the goals, potential impacts, and

limitations it leaves too much room for participants to be confused about their agency within the action and too much room for communications about that action to be disingenuous. This is about radical honesty and integrity and it's about the conversations we are able to have inside of ourselves as much as it is about the conversations that happen in media or on social media or amongst social groups.

When there is clear communication about potentials and limitations of outcomes in acknowledgement of resources and capacity it has a better chance of creating a knowing and calmness amongst participants about risk and reward. Too often I have been around people who seemingly heighten people around them about ‘shit about to go down’ or aggrandizing moments of tension with police/conflict that are not in calm awareness of the action’s limitations or purpose. This can distress people, causes confusion about said limitations and goals and is often performed to position that self as militant or more experienced in a clout chasing exercise that needs to be routed from liberation movements. People can and should always be looking for opportunities to create moments of rupture that can expand these potential impacts or increase capacity, but I hope it's clear that spontaneity isn’t what I’m trying to address here. Spontaneous ruptures are best created and built on when the opportunity is recognised as such by the group *because* everyone is on the same page and realistic about what is currently happening and what could happen. Not because there are individuals not focussed

on reality but in some heightened revolutionary storm of their imagination. The same goes for the inverse of this when often self-appointed leaders try to corral or manage individuals or groups searching for ways to expand those limitations in recognition of resource and capacity available. This can be done without aggrandizing or heightening people but simply not being flat footed or controlled by cultures that quell autonomous thinking and activity within actions. Be clear with our tactics and what they mean, how they apply to a broader strategy, the goals which we *expect* to achieve, *would like* to achieve and when we press our capacities and limitations *might be able* to achieve.

Integrity in action

"*Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories...*"

- Amilcar Cabral

HAARETZ

Furthermore, in the past, various international bodies commented favorably on the Hamas ministry's level of accuracy, and even Dr. Michael Milshtein, formerly the head of the department of Palestinian affairs in Israeli Military Intelligence, noted, in connection with another report, that "Hamas is an organization of numbers and accuracy." This data may be revised in the future, following investigations by

I have put this image here for an opportunity to notice and reflect on a resistance movement like Hamas' impetus to maintain integrity. This is not just in relation to the Gaza Ministry of Health's' mortality reporting. But rather the way the allied brigades do not take credit for victories or actions that were not at their hand or did not occur, despite how easy that would be to do in the modern climate of disinformation and hyper speed newsreels. War propaganda has been standard practice on a mass scale for the last century and encapsulates not only the biassed/manipulative approach but also simply the act of putting out media as a partisan which is intended to 'propagate' ideas and inform people of what is taking/has taken place. The distinction between

biassed/neutral propaganda, which English lacks language for, seems relevant to me. Communicating ideas, actions, choices, and ways of being is an important node of any liberation movement's struggle. It gives people the opportunity to understand something and decide whether their values align with those ways of being. It can produce a feeling of pride, inclusion and 'part of something'-ness. All media has a lens and neutrality is not entirely possible but honouring truth and directness as participants in global solidarity must be maintained. We should strive for an integrity with our outward communication as a model of transparency as a movement geared toward liberation, as a practice of honesty both within our individual selves, amongst our comrades and broader community and because to project mistruths that oversell our impacts literally makes us weaker. Making debased propaganda is a tool of tyrants, clearly communicating our victories, challenges and defeats is the propaganda of the people.

There is a tendency in western leftist movements to over congratulate itself. The bar set for what is considered success in activism in Australia is scarily low. This makes sense when often the inclination for action often has little to do with material conditions of our lives. We live relatively comfortably, those engaged in activism are often from various overlapping places of privilege and the liberation being fought for is often abstracted from *the now* for people participating. This, of course, is not the whole truth, but it does make up a pretty decent chunk of participants who engage in political action in Australia and the broader culture in which it is reproduced. This

isn’t to unfairly target white middle class activists for blame or shame, we are all oppressed by the systems that surround us and we are all hurt by them, but those intersectional attributes of privilege (along with other different combinations of privilege which other identities and socialisations can inhabit) seem to contribute to a tendency to accept or offer over-congratulations or over-estimation of an action’s ‘success’ more easily and readily.

Anyway, what is success? How *do* we congratulate ourselves and our comrades reasonably without an oversell, and what's the problem with the oversell? Success is immediate when we get together. Success is immediate when we agree and cooperate and don’t infringe on one another. Success is immediate when we disagree but move forward alongside one another respecting and holding space for our differences. Success is knowing our capacities and resources to achieve goals that we are clear about and that we set about achieving. It's pushing ourselves to those capacity’s limitations - or even better to outdo those expectations through spontaneity, risk taking and rupture when strategically appropriate.

Does that mean we always need to celebrate these moments as ‘victories’ and congratulate? Internally, sure, we ought to be gentle with and proud of ourselves when we try *anything* alongside others in this alienated and isolated world. Externally in our community we can congratulate to an honest and realistic degree that is proportionate to our collectively understood tactic’s ability

to achieve an outcome we desired. But where is the but? Here is the but:

But! When we oversell what we have achieved. When we exaggerate the impacts that we have caused. When we do not push our capacities to their limits to achieve a stated goal - unless for a valid reason like over estimating capacity or a changed circumstance that wasn't predictable - then we can't label these as successes. It's fraudulent and not in good faith to do so. Which, in my opinion, does not demonstrate the values that I identify with a liberation movement, not to mention is strategically foolish. This is when self-congratulations can demonstrate a pathology that manifests *because* there is lack of clarity in stated/potential goals - it's easy to claim a victory when no one is sure what the outcome was meant to be. We should be able to specify to one another - "our victory today was coming together and doing something which disrupted business as usual, and some media picked it up" - which is true and real and fantastic but *is not* "Victory! We shut down this building! That was a successful action! congratulations everyone," when actually, a building wasn't 'shut down' and that *was* a stated/implied aim, so in fact impacts and capacity were overestimated, and the tactic applied didn't achieve the stated aim. Why is this bad?

Beyond the feeling that lying to ourselves, the media and in our current context, our Palestinian brothers and sisters, does not fit within my values or the values of a liberation movement, it creates a false sense of achievement which can and does inhibit creativity, experimentation and diversifying tactics when necessary.

It demonstrates how abstracted the movement is from its failures by being able to exaggerate parts of them as successful, when they weren't in fact the elements of the action that were successful. In this I'm saying celebrate and congratulate but be specific about what part of an action is worth those things, especially when a word like 'victory' starts getting used. Because god only knows that the victory of total liberation is a fucking long way from where we are and that word should be reserved for outcomes that exceed our expectations and for circumstances of outstanding outcomes or triumph over unexpected adversity. It is pertinent to *seem* weaker than to overstate how strong we are.

This twitter interaction sort of shows this implicit deceit that takes place (both IRL but particularly in online spaces, understandably) and also displays an awareness of the disingenuousness of communication by the activists in the first place. There is no answer to the question but an admittance that the action implied in the first was never true. It is not about saying that this isn't worth doing, but there was no 'blocking' of anything, so why say it? Why is there an impetus to imply more impact than what is occurring? This is a legitimate symbolic protest using theatre and presence in a strategic location to spread awareness about ZIM's

complicity with the ongoing occupation of Palestine - it is not blocking nor material in any way and should not be postured or celebrated as such. Celebrate and promote what you are doing, not what you're not doing. Congratulations for what *is* happening are worthwhile when everyone acknowledges stated aims and limitations (am i a broken record by this point?).

I'm not suggesting that in promoting an event groups or individuals should say "come and do a partial/temporary blockade," instead of "come and blockade," because that language can limit our potentialities and there is never any reason to assume our tactics can't be expansive in moments of action. But in claiming those actions, either in real time or afterwards, an honesty must be applied so as to not imply or claim impacts that out-weigh the actual reality. Not doing this can circumvent the beauty in growth when actions *are* expansive and achieving more than expected. We don't get to celebrate and congratulate as we should if we *actually* shut down a building if we've been saying it's been shut down multiple times prior when it hasn't. This is also about accountability to our comrades globally, if you are in the confrontation to take down settler colonialism, to imply that risks are being taken *that aren't* is problematic as well. People are constantly risking their lives for their liberation. From this context to see communication from the west implying that actions taken have shut down entire ports/arms manufacturers without acknowledging

the tactics that would need to be applied for this to actually happen implies people are going to much greater extremes of risk than they actually are. This is something that is deeply uncomfortable for me as a person who exists in a comfortable western context who, just like everyone, has limitations and fears associated with how much risk I am willing to expose my body/liberty to. I'm not willing to posture as if the things I'm doing are riskier than they are. It undermines real and increased risk when people must and are willing to take that risk.

We should seek to have a balanced view of ourselves. We don't need to treat ourselves as children who need to be paternalistically and patronisingly encouraged when we do the most menial of things. Nor should we exaggerate these things as if those in power are threatened by our bullshit as if this assists in convincing the masses of the overwhelming success of our tactics when they aren't being accurately portrayed. We can leave that dance to more liberal or pathological elements of a movement who want kudos, likes, clout and to feel good about themselves. Rather, we can role model and embody our dedication to transparency, accountability, and effective action by moving into those spaces, always inviting others to inhabit a more honest, horizontal, thoughtful, and flexible way of being.

What is the point of this?

I'm hoping that this might contribute to people having clearer language around actions being taken because whilst I'm inspired, I'm also bothered about what's going on in this moment - but I don't want to be stalled into cynicism. I'm writing so we get better versed at understanding goals, potentials and impacts and their relation to tactics and strategy. To think about honesty and integrity in our movements. To work towards decolonial praxis in our actions and in ourselves because in my heart I believe that our personal journeys of unsettling ourselves will help action be more directed, clear, effective, and radical. I'm not an expert on anything. This is an offer that is open and down for constructive critique and further collective clarification. There are undoubtedly more experienced and clearer thinkers than me on any of the things I've attempted to articulate and think about here. I hope it can inspire people to have generative discussions about all these things and build on them to collectively create innovative pathways toward liberation. Be nice to each other.

howdowedecolonizeaction@gmail.com for dialogue and abuse (please no abuse).

Pusher

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